



Royal Flying Doctor Service
QUEENSLAND SECTION

The official magazine of the Royal Flying Doctor Service
QUEENSLAND SECTION · SUMMER 2019 >

Flying Doctor

INSIDE THIS ISSUE GET TO KNOW OUR CEO • FARMHAND TO FLYING DOCTOR • THE GIFT THAT STARTED IT ALL



Get to know

... **Meredith Staib,**
... RFDS (Queensland Section) CEO.

Why did you want to become CEO of the RFDS (Queensland Section)?

Since starting my own career as a retrieval nurse on the Sunshine Coast, the RFDS has always held a special place in my heart. I've always dreamt of being part of this iconic organisation and to be able to do this and help deliver health care to Australians across the country is truly incredible.

Tell us a little bit more about yourself

I have a beautiful family here in Brisbane, I'm an avid runner and I really enjoy getting out into the garden. At work I genuinely love being a part of a big team – that's what I thrive on and where I get my energy from. Working for a cause I'm passionate about is also a must and I am very thankful that I can work for such a reputable and loved Australian health care organisation.

What have you most enjoyed about working at the RFDS?

For me, it's all about connecting with people. Since joining in August, wherever I travel, people stop me and thank me for the Flying Doctor saving their life or the life of a loved one. I've been thanked by fathers who are still with their families; mothers, for the lives of their babies, and I've been thanked by people who have been transported for life-saving treatment.

I've had the chance as well to meet with some special donors and fundraisers so far. Hearing about their connection to RFDS and why they choose to support is truly eye-opening. It brings me so much joy knowing I'm part of an organisation that does such remarkable things for people across the state.

What have been your biggest accomplishments to date?

The biggest accomplishment in my life, first and foremost, would be my two children who keep me grounded and entertained on a daily basis.

My education milestones have been graduating as a registered nurse and completing my MBA, and from a career point of view it would be my last role where I led the evacuation of a team into Nepal after an earthquake.

For me, making a difference every day no matter how big or small is an accomplishment and I can't wait to achieve some incredible feats with RFDS!



Farmhand to *Flying Doctor*

The mail plane was small. It didn't fill me with confidence – one engine, one pilot. But he was friendly and made me feel a little reassured. I was 15 years old and heading out to Abingdon Downs Station in gulf country Queensland, to visit my school friend Klancie, and 'help' with the mustering.



Katrina Starmer, RFDS Doctor

The pilot asked if I'd like to follow the course of the Einasleigh River. I thought that sounded nice. But it wasn't until we'd done half an hour of banking and rolling on our scenic tour, that I regretted my decision. When I arrived at Abingdon, the cowboys mentioned I was very pale – a reflection on both my city complexion and my motion sickness. I remember thinking 'this is a bad start!'

During the two weeks of mustering on horseback, there was a still and hot day I remember well. We were riding through rubber vine along the edge of the river. Klancie's older brother, Campbell, was cutting through the vine with his knife, and a long cane flicked back and stabbed me in the eye. At first I thought nothing of it – the pain of being poked in the eye was insignificant compared to the stifling heat and dust of the muster. But the next morning when I woke and my eye was the size of a tennis ball, Campbell took me aside and called the RFDS.

It was fortunate that an RFDS clinic doctor was in Georgetown that day, about one and a half hours drive away, so Campbell took a day off his muster and drove me into town to meet the doctor off the plane. He had brown hair and a gentle manner, and in that moment I was inspired. Who is this person that flies into places unknown and fixes people who are sick? He was my hero. He showed me the cut across my conjunctiva and gave me drops to use every two hours. My eye was better within a couple of days and I continued the muster.

Five years on and I had spent many school holidays on Abingdon Downs. Sometimes on horseback behind the mob, sometimes in the poddy wagon ute, sometimes in a helicopter spotting cleanskins, but always working. It was my dream to be like these people – tough and enduring, but the clincher came when an RFDS Field Day crew arrived at Abingdon. They brought models and books and medical educators and it was all very interesting. Not to mention the spread of scones and ANZAC biscuits that the camp cook prepared.

At the end of the day, I mentioned I was heading home that weekend and the pilot and crew asked if I wanted to travel home with them. Well, that was the opportunity of a lifetime for me. Never before had I felt so privileged. A girl from Townsville on a King Air with the RFDS, flying home across the outback after a mission to help people. That was it! I was determined to work for the Flying Doctor.

It took me more than 20 years to get there, with medical school, basic training and a fellowship in Emergency Medicine, but this year I realised my dream. Ironically and with sadness, it was on my very first day at the RFDS Cairns Base that I learned my friends had mustered on Abingdon for the last time after selling the property and ending a three-generation legacy. But the legacy they left for me will be long-lasting.

I hope to give back to the people of the bush, on the Cape and out West, by being there for them on the phone, in the air and on the ground, hoping to help in the way that both they, and the doctors of the RFDS, helped and inspired me.



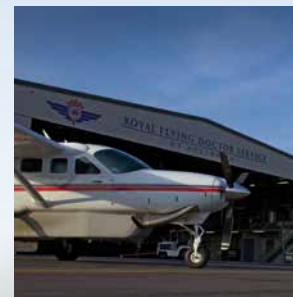
Pictured Left to Right > Barry Keough, Katrina Starmer, Klancie Keough, Scotty Marsterson

A SPOTLIGHT ON OUR BASES

Cairns Base

RFDS Cairns Base commenced operations in 1972 following relocation from Charters Towers. It is the largest and one of the longest serving bases in the RFDS network.

Services provided from this Base include remote medical consultations, aeromedical retrievals and primary health care clinics incorporating general practice, child and family health, Indigenous health, mental health, women's health and health promotion.



CAIRNS BASE 2017/18

 Number of aircraft	4	 Hours flown	3,044	 Patient consultations	21,323
 Number of landings	2,393	 Numbers of clinics	2,924	 Remote consultation calls	7,738
 Kilometres flown	989,244	 Patients transported	1,034	 Number of immunisations	2,482



GET TO KNOW

Leanne Lowe

CAIRNS BASE SERVICES COORDINATOR AT THE ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE (QUEENSLAND SECTION).

For Cairns Base Services Coordinator Leanne Lowe, working for the Royal Flying Doctor Service was destined to be. With a husband in the Australian Defence Force, moving around frequently was something Leanne and her family were used to, but when they came to Cairns and Leanne landed her job at the RFDS Cairns Base, everything seemed to fall into place.

Starting off as a temporary employee in 2010, Leanne was made permanent seven months later. She knew this was an organisation she wanted to stay a part of for many years to come.

“One of my first jobs was to archive documents and while I was doing this I came across an old box filled with letters that had been sent to us. Reading these letters of gratitude touched my heart and brought tears to my eyes,” Leanne remembers.

“One letter that really stood out to me was from a lady who had a premature baby and was flown to Cairns. Although her baby didn’t survive, the time she took to write this incredible letter filled with kind words of appreciation was so touching to read. It really brought home to me what the RFDS is all about – bringing the finest care to the furthest corner – and I know 90 years on, Reverend John Flynn would be extremely proud.”

For Leanne, who has now been at the Cairns Base for eight years, each day brings something new.

“You can start your day with a to-do-list and that could completely be thrown out the window. You

have to be adaptable and juggle multiple priorities so our team can focus on caring for people in need,” she said.

“As I always say, support staff are like a V8 pit crew – no one ever wins a race without them! While my contribution in the scheme of things is small, I know it helps keep the wheels turning.”

At the end of the day, not much has changed from when Leanne first started and read those letters.

“For me, it’s about the people we help and those that help us, our supporters. You never get tired of hearing those stories, they still bring a tear to my eye but at the same time they make me so proud to be part of the RFDS.”

As I always say, support staff are like a V8 pit crew – no one ever wins a race without them! While my contribution in the scheme of things is small, I know it helps keep the wheels turning.



A breath, a smile and tears of relief
– all thanks to you

Above > Georgia in ICU at Townsville Hospital

Every parent's worst fear is something happening to their child, and for parents of 11-year-old Georgia they faced this reality almost two years ago.

You may recognise Georgia from our most recent Christmas Appeal – Georgia came close to losing her life after contracting a bacterial infection from soil on her parent's farm. One year and 10 months on, Georgia's mum, Linda, still remembers the day like it was yesterday:

“Georgia’s not the type of child who likes to sleep in. I think you’ll find that most kids raised on cattle stations are of the ‘get up and go’ variety. When I went into her room to wake her, she was really out of it, she was boiling hot, and she was breathing with these rapid, shallow breaths – like she was gasping for air. I woke her and said, ‘No arguing. We’re getting you in the car and we’re getting you to Chillagoe right away,’” Linda said.

Chillagoe is the site of Linda’s nearest medical clinic. But being some 130km away, only someone who lives in remote Australia would call it “local” as she did.

“When we got to the Chillagoe Primary Health Centre, the nurse on duty, took her oxygen saturation, and she told me it was dangerously low. She told me she needed to get to intensive care urgently and without pausing she called for a Flying Doctor aeromedical team.

“I was so shocked; I honestly thought the nurse would prescribe some antibiotics and send us on our way. As we waited for the Flying Doctor to arrive, I called my husband, Mark, who was alone back at the cattle station to tell him what was happening. Then I sat down and held Georgia’s hand for dear life.”

Less than 90 minutes later Dr Taylor and the aeromedical team arrived at the clinic and took over Georgia’s emergency care with equipment purchased thanks to supporters like you.

On her own, young Georgia didn’t stand a chance. This severe infection and the resulting pneumonia would have been too much for her. However, with the aid of the ventilator, endotracheal tube and other essential breathing equipment they had, they were able to stabilise Georgia and ready her for her 500km dash to Townsville Hospital.

Georgia arrived in Townsville Hospital’s Intensive Care Unit (ICU) alive, but far from well. After a swift and professional handover from Dr Taylor, she was quickly in the capable hands of the excellent intensive care specialists who were waiting to take over her care.

Linda was soon joined at her daughter’s bedside by her mother-in-law, Sharyn, and they took it in turns to stand vigil over her as she underwent intensive treatment at Townsville Hospital. They watched and waited in hope that she would start to get better. And thankfully, 24 hours later, she began to show signs of improvement.

With each hour that passed, her breathing became more and more comfortable. So much so that, not long after, her doctor decided to disconnect her from her ventilator.

When Georgia opened her eyes to find her mum and grandma by her side, she greeted them with a big smile and all that Linda and Sharyn could do was burst into tears of relief.

Thanks to support from incredible people like you, more than \$450,000 was raised for the 2018 Christmas Appeal – enough to fund vital medical equipment including Ventilators, IStat Analysers, suction machines and endotracheal tubes. These items are what Dr Taylor used on board to help stabilise Georgia and keep her breathing on the emergency flight from Chillagoe to Townsville.

By supporting the Flying Doctor, you are helping to ensure our aeromedical teams will have the equipment they need to save lives, like Georgia’s, for many years to come.



Above > Georgia home and back on her horse. Right > Flight Nurse Denise with the newest Hamilton Ventilator.

It all started with a

Gift in Will.

In 1917, Reverend John Flynn received an inspirational letter from Lieutenant Clifford Peel, a medical student with an interest in aviation.

The young airman and war hero suggested the use of aviation to bring medical help to the Outback. Shot down in France, he died at just 24 years of age and never knew that his letter became a blueprint for the creation of the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

For the next ten years, Flynn campaigned for an aerial medical service that would provide a 'mantle of safety' for the people of the bush.

His vision became a reality when his long-time supporter, HV McKay, left a large bequest for 'an aerial experiment' which enabled Flynn to get the Flying Doctor airborne.

"If you start something worthwhile - nothing can stop it."

~ Reverend John Flynn



The Flying Doctor was built with a Gift in Will, and it's through Gifts in Wills that we will be here serving the people of Queensland for another 90 years.

A Gift in your Will can make a real difference to the Flying Doctor and the people we serve. Queenslanders living in remote, rural and regional areas of our beautiful state, trust the Flying Doctor to be there when they need us. Our dedicated Flight Nurses, Doctors and Pilots are symbols of hope, whether our patients are in pain and distress, or need routine medical care.

Our staff are dedicated skilled professionals and our aircraft are fitted with the life-saving equipment needed to ensure the best outcomes for our patients. It's here, at the sharp end, that your Gift in Will can make a real difference. The Flying Doctor can only maintain our world-class aeromedical retrieval teams and aircraft, because of the foresight and generosity of people like you. People who make a choice to become an essential member of the RFDS team by leaving a Gift in Will.

Maureen, is one of our wonderful donors who has generously made the choice to leave a Gift in Will to the Flying Doctor in Queensland.

“I have supported the Royal Flying Doctor Service for many years, and I know my donations help to save lives and improve the health of people living out west.”

~ Maureen



“My late husband Barry and I, lived and worked in Sydney for many years, before retiring to the Queensland Coast. It's easy for people in towns and cities to access routine and emergency medical care, but in remote, rural and regional parts of the State it's much more difficult. I believe it's important for all Queenslanders to be safe in the knowledge that the Flying Doctor is there for them, and their families when they need it, and that is why I have chosen to leave a Gift in my Will to the Flying Doctor in Queensland.”

For more information about how to leave a Gift in your Will to the Flying Doctor please call Heather on **07 3852 7586** or email hstott@rfdsqld.com.au. Heather is happy to organise a tour of one of our Bases for you, and she can show you exactly how your Gift in Will can make a difference.

Queenslanders living in remote, rural and regional areas of our beautiful state, trust the Flying Doctor to be there when they need us.





A chat with

Christopher Wallin

A Flying Doctor supporter

Queenslander, Christopher Wallin supports the Royal Flying Doctor Service, but he's probably better known as a successful business man and the Managing Director of QCoal Group.

We caught up with Chris recently to discover more about his life, and why he chooses to support the Flying Doctor.

I guess you could say I had a typical childhood. I went to a local school and had holidays at the beach at Christmas. My father was born in Eidsvold, Queensland. He fought in World War II and on his return, he put himself through university. Mum believed strongly in the advantages of a tertiary education, even though she left school at the end of grade 8.

I was interested in rocks, minerals, and soils from a young age and when I was awarded a scholarship to study geology at the University

of Queensland, I didn't really consider any other profession. After I graduated, I began working for the Queensland Mines Department and my job was to discover coal deposits throughout Queensland.

The first time I travelled out west for any real length of time was as a young geologist. I love the natural landscapes in Australia, but the isolation was always a factor and we had to be careful because if you are injured on an exploration program, you are generally a long way from help.

I think this experience informed both my respect for the individuals that live and work on the land, as well as my keen awareness of the varying levels of access to both frontline and specialist healthcare services in rural and remote communities. I think the Flying Doctor team embodies the qualities of Queenslanders; hard work, persistence and resilience.

My father always remembered those who had helped him during World War II. After retirement he volunteered regularly to assist

"I was brought up by parents who wanted to give back. My mother was always a strong believer in the importance of helping others less fortunate."

returned servicemen as they aged. Simple things like hospital visits or helping with paperwork and tax returns.

I think we all need to remember where we have come from and those who have helped us on our journey. I also think we need to look for the simple, effective solutions that are often there, but might need some time to develop. By supporting a cause over a longer period, you can really see something grow and take shape.

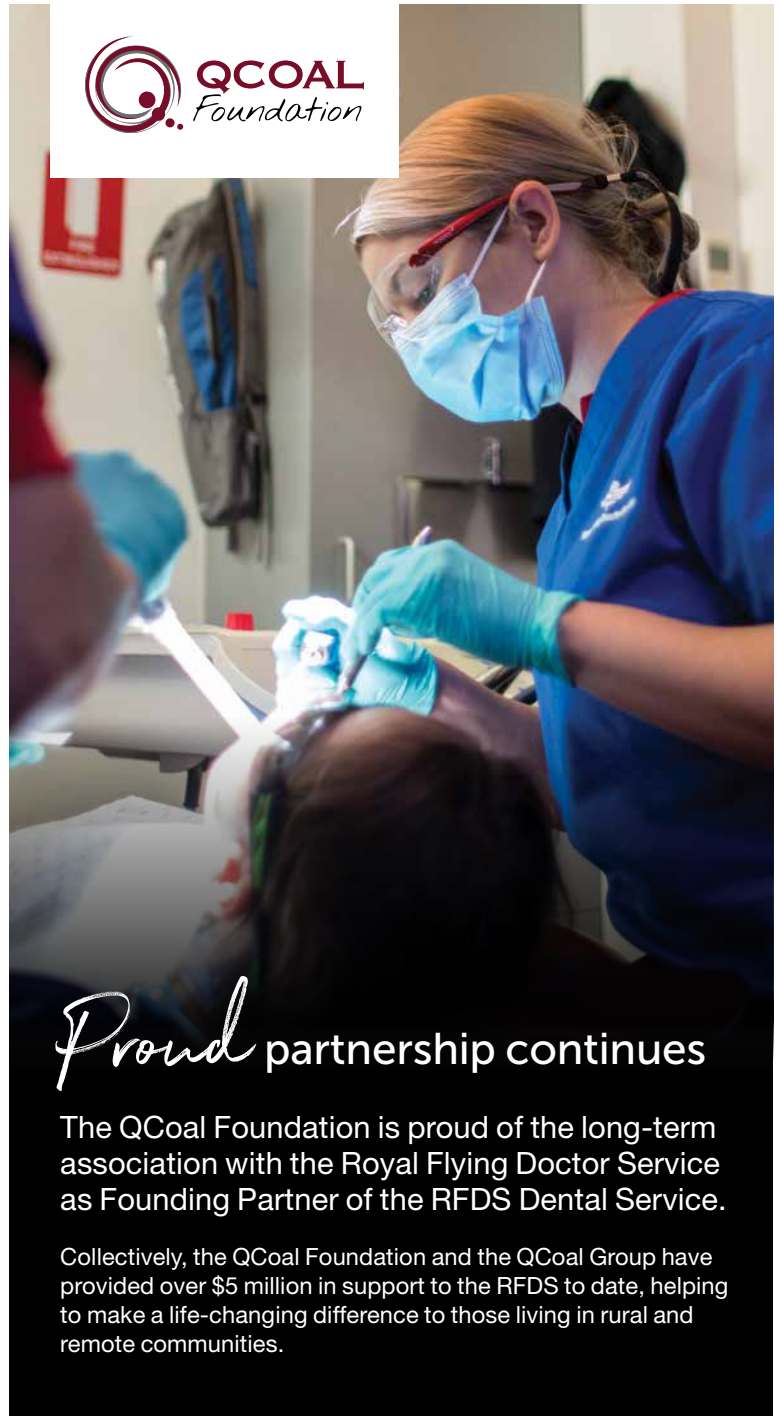
The Flying Doctor motto of "the furthest corner, the finest care" really typifies the sort of organisation that I want to support and partner with. The RFDS is known for understanding health issues throughout the bush and delivering a service that really makes a difference in those communities.

"Currently the greatest challenge facing people out west is drought. That will be front of mind for most people. "

Loneliness and isolation can affect people as well, especially when their farm is under financial stress. The challenges can be overwhelming. I am proud to partner with organisations like RFDS who directly change the lives of rural Queenslanders every day.

I started giving small donations to the RFDS as a private individual, and did so for many years, so once I started to think more seriously about giving back to the rural areas I love, it seemed natural to partner with the RFDS.

When we formed the QCoal Foundation our first priority was developing our RFDS dental partnership. I'm particularly proud that the dental service moved from just extractions and treatments to preventative dental care in many communities. I am also proud that advocacy by the RFDS and the QCoal Foundation resulted in the Commonwealth government seeing the value of the service and agreeing to fund it as a long-term solution to the lack of adequate dental care in rural and remote areas.



Proud partnership continues

The QCoal Foundation is proud of the long-term association with the Royal Flying Doctor Service as Founding Partner of the RFDS Dental Service.

Collectively, the QCoal Foundation and the QCoal Group have provided over \$5 million in support to the RFDS to date, helping to make a life-changing difference to those living in rural and remote communities.

A local hero in disguise



An unassuming figure with a heart and sense of community spirit as vast as his backyard in south west Queensland, Scott Shorten, was the deserving winner of the 2018 RFDS Queensland Hero Award.



Scott could be considered the backbone of the remote Yowah community in south west Queensland. From helping the RFDS for many years when there's a medical emergency, to leading the Yowah SES, the whole community would call Scott if they were ever in medical trouble.

As part of the Award, Scott was given a \$5,000 grant by Ergon Energy Retail, a key community partner of RFDS since 2000, to be used to improve health outcomes for people of his community.

Scott has already used these funds, along with generous other donations, to purchase an ex-ambulance. Currently in the stages of being fitted-out, the ambulance will transport sick and injured patients from Yowah to the airstrip, 4km out of town. It will also be used to pick up the RFDS Primary Health Care team which travels to Yowah to conduct regular GP clinics.

RFDS cannot thank Ergon Energy Retail customers and employees enough for their continued support to keep regional communities connected to medical care, treatment and essential services.

L-R Scott Shorten, his wife, Barbara, their granddaughter, Chloe, The Honourable Anastacia Palaszczuk MP, Premier of Queensland and Linda Whatman, General Manager Process, Products and Customer Experience, Ergon Energy Retail.



Clearing the path to save lives

RFDS Senior Base Pilot, Steve Wallace, knows all too well the significance priority landings play in a medical emergency.

“Priority landings are a must in emergencies and we rely on the support of Brisbane Airport Corporation (BAC) and Air Traffic Control to allow us to do this,” Steve said.

“This is a different type of aviation job - we are helping to deliver people safely to care in their greatest time of need.”

Clearing the flight path for medical emergencies is something BAC and Air Traffic Control has proudly been assisting the Flying Doctor in Queensland with for many years.

As a gateway to many of Queensland's tertiary hospitals, BAC has been making it possible for the

Flying Doctor to transport thousands of patients to specialist care each year. Since the partnership began in 2009, BAC has helped more than 25,000 flights come into and out of Brisbane Airport!

Over the past 10 years, BAC has also contributed more than \$2.5 million to the RFDS to help fund vital aviation and medical equipment.

With both aviation and medicine being an extremely expensive exercise, BAC's contribution has helped the RFDS towards continuing to provide an exceptional level of care to patients across Queensland.





A rewarding career – all thanks to you

At the age of 40, Shane Wise, felt it was time for a career change and a flying lesson gifted by his wife cemented just that.



Having an avid interest in flying from a young age, Shane knew this was something he always wanted to do but never took up the opportunity until that moment.

“I was at a point in my life where I just knew IT consulting was not what I wanted to do anymore, so I thought ... how about I do something I have always wanted to, and become a pilot?” Shane said.

Knowing that he didn't want to become a commercial airline pilot, the RFDS immediately appealed to him.

“I wanted to do something different and I've always had an interest in helping people, so I knew the RFDS was where I wanted to go. I just needed to figure out how.”

From that moment, Shane began working towards accruing the hours needed for a role with the RFDS. Over seven years, and through numerous pilot roles, Shane accrued his hours and landed the opportunity to become a pilot for the RFDS at the Alice Springs base.

“In the four years I was working with Central Operations I gained so much experience, and when my wife and I decided to make the move back to Queensland a job opportunity in Charleville presented itself so I took it. Really, it all just fell into place,” Shane said.

So, Shane, his wife, and their two dogs made the move to Charleville. For Shane, each day is different bringing an exciting element to the job, whether it be working on the flights for clinics, inter-hospital transfers or primary retrievals.

“Airline pilots get up and basically know what their route is, but for us it changes every day. No two retrievals are the same, in fact,

no day is ever the same and being involved in helping deliver people safely to care is really amazing,” he said.

“In this role you have to be flexible and think on the run – it's constantly evolving and that's the whole reason why I do it, and why I love it.”

One clinic in particular that stood out to Shane was in Windorah in August this year.

“We were in the process of packing up the clinic to head back to Charleville when a woman and her husband came in at the last minute – he was having a heart attack,” he said.

It was clear that Shane and his team were running on borrowed time so a plan needed to be made on the spot.

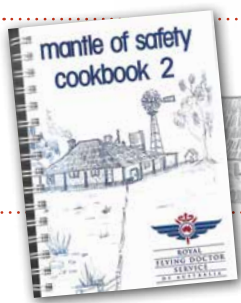
“We called ahead to our colleagues at Charleville Base to arrange the next rostered aeromedical team to come in early to assist us,” Shane said.

“We quickly worked on a plan to fly the patient to Charleville and transferred him onto the other aircraft that would immediately take off for Toowoomba so he could receive the care he needed.

“A few weeks later, we got a lovely letter from his wife thanking us for everything we did. Seeing things like that is what makes this job so rewarding.”

In his spare time, Shane is an avid photographer and plays guitar – both of which he's been doing since school. However, his real passion lies with flying and the love of the job.

“I never get up in the morning and say, ‘I don't want to go to work today’. For me, every day brings something different and that's what I love about working with the RFDS.”



A taste of

ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE

mantle of safety cookbook 2

Fruit Flan

Biscuit Pastry

90g butter
1 egg
½ tspn. baking powder

2 tbspn. butter
1½ cups plain flour

METHOD:

Beat butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg and beat well. Mix in dry ingredients to a firm dough. Roll out and bake blind in 23cm pie plate for 20-25 mins. Cool.

Filling

3 tspn. custard powder
1 cup water
470g apricots
½ tspn. vanilla
½ cup cream
2 tbspn. sugar

½ cup Sunshine Instant Milk powder
1 punnet strawberries
470g pitted black cherries
1 tbspn. brandy
Glaze: 2 tbspn. apricot jam

METHOD:

Combine custard powder, sugar and powdered milk in saucepan. Gradually add water, stir until blended and smooth. Bring to the boil stirring constantly. Add vanilla, cool. When cold fold in lightly whipped cream. Pour custard into cold pie shell. Arrange well drained fruit and strawberries decoratively over custard.

Combine jam and brandy in small saucepan, heat gently until boiling. Push through sieve and brush over fruit. Refrigerate no longer than 1 hour before serving.
Serves 6-8



Lamingtons

Cake

3 eggs
15g butter
¼ cup cornflour

¾ cup S.R. flour
½ cup caster sugar
3 tbspn. hot water

METHOD:

Beat eggs until light and fluffy and gradually add sugar. Sift dry ingredients into the egg mixture. Combine hot water and butter and add to the mixture. Pour into a buttered and lined lamington tin and bake at 180°C for 30 mins. Cool or freeze. Cut the cake into 16 squares. Dip each cake into chocolate icing and toss in coconut.

Chocolate Icing

500g icing sugar
2 tbspn. butter
coconut for coating

1/3 cup cocoa
½ cup milk

METHOD:

Mix icing sugar and cocoa, add softened butter and milk. Cook over gentle heat until mixture is smooth, adding more liquid if required.



RFDS Queensland Section's year in numbers



QUEENSLAND SECTION
2017/18



11,479

Patients flown
by the RFDS in
2017/18



7,743,604

Kilometers flown by
the Queensland
Section in the past year



366

Staff members across the
entire scope of Queensland
Section operations



1,192

RFDS Dental
Service patients



24,992

Patients seen at
3,280 primary
health care clinics



13,338

Remote consultation
calls through our
telehealth service



8,350

Mental health
clinic patient
consultations



OUR SUPPORTERS >



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This newsletter is produced by the Marketing and Fundraising Department of the RFDS in Queensland.

If you do not wish to receive future editions of this newsletter, please contact the RFDS on 07 3860 1100 or email: donations@rfdsqld.com.au

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